

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

SAJ-01 GAC-01 MBFR-03 OMB-01 RSR-01 /111 W  
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9424

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS UNN

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 11039

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH ELECTION RESULTS AND NEW GOVERNMENT -- PART  
I OF TWO PART MESSAGE

1. SUMMARY. THIS MESSAGE COMMENTS ON INTERNAL POLITICS AND  
INSTITUTIONS. PART II DEALS WITH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES.  
SUMMARY OF PART I INCLUDES FOLLOWING POINTS: ( A) POMPIDOU  
EMERGES FROM ELECTIONS ABLE TO DOMINATE, WITH FEW RESTRICTIONS,  
GOVERNMENT AND GOF POLICIES; ( B) HE READS ELECTION RESULTS AS  
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EXPRESSION OF AMBIGUOUS PUBLIC SENTIMENT FAVORING BOTH CHANGE AND CONTINUITY; (C) HE IS LIKELY TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY, THEREFORE, IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AREAS, AND GRADUALLY TO TRY TO TRANSFORM GOVERNMENT COALITION FROM GAULLIST- DOMINATED BLOC WITH TRACES OF MODERN CONSERVATISM, TO MODERN CONSERVATIVE BLOC WITH TRACES OF GAULLISM. THIS MAY MEAN AT SOME POINT ENLARGING COALITION TO INCLUDE CENTER OPPOSITION ELEMENTS; (D) PRESIDENT ALSO APPEARS WILLING TO DEVELOP SOMEWHAT MORE FLEXIBLE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS BY REDUCING PRESIDENTIAL TERM FROM SEVEN TO FIVE YEARS AND ENLARGING ROLE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, BUT PROBABLY NOT TO EXTENT OF CEDING ANY BASIC POWERS NOW HELD BY EXECUTIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. MARCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OCCURRED NEAR MID POINT OF PRESIDENT POMPIDOU' S SEVEN- YEAR TERM AND RESULTS REPRESENT MORE THAN SYMBOLIC PAGE- TURNING IN HISTORY OF FIFTH REPUBLIC. THE OLD ASSEMBLY AND GOVERNMENT WERE ROOTED IN GAULLIST PAST, WHILE THE NEW ASSEMBLY IS THE FIRST OF STRICTLY POMPIDOU AREA AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS COMPOSED OF POMPIDOU' S MEN. THE GAULLIST " BARONS" HAVE NOT DISAPPEARED. MICHEL DEBRE, MAURICE COUVE DE MURVILLE, JACQUES CHABAN- DELMAS AND ROGER FREY ARE IN THE ASSEMBLY AND HAVE AN IMPORTANT FOLLOWING WITHIN THE UDR. AS ONE DEPARTING MINISTER PUT IT, SPEAKING SPECIFICALLY OF COUVE DE MURVILLE AND DEBRE, " THEY CONSTITUTE GAULLIST AUTHORITY." THEIR POWER AND THEIR FOLLOWING WITHIN THE COUNTRY, HOWEVER, ARE NOT SUCH THAT THEY CAN INITIATE OR EVEN GREATLY INFLUENCE GOV POLICY. RATHER, THEY HAVE A BLOCKING POWER, OR AT LEAST A BRAKING POWER, WHICH THEY COULD EXERCISE IF POMPIDOU MOVED TOO FAST OR TOO FAR IN DIRECTIONS THEY OPPOSED.

3. BUT THE PRESIDENT EMERGED FROM THE ELECTIONS BEHOLDEN NEITHER TO THE GAULLIST OLD GUARD NOR TO OTHER GROUPS, PARTIES OR POLITICAL FIGURES. IN FACT, HE CAN MAKE A CASE THAT HIS INTERVENTION IN THE CAMPAIGN, WITH HIS TWO NATION- WIDE TELEVISION ADDRESSES, PULLED THE GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTIES' CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE FIRE. HE OF COURSE NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT COALITION FACTIONS, I. E., THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS, THE CENTER UNION GROUP, THE ORTHODOX GAULLISTS, THE FOLLOWERS OF EDGAR FAURE, ETC., TO MAINTAIN AN ASSEMBLY MAJORITY. AND, THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT, WITH ITS IDEOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC BALANCE, REPRESENTS AN EFFORT TO ASSURE THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ASSEMBLY MAJORITY ARE IN POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM. IF THE OR-  
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THODOX GAULLISTS GRUMBLE ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF PONIATOWSKI IN

THE GOVERNMENT, THEY CAN TAKE SATISFACTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF ALIAN PEYREFITTE, HUBERT GERMAIN, ROBERT GALLEY AND THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF -- ALL OF WHOM, WHILE PERSONALLY LOYAL TO POMPIDOU, HAVE IMPECCABLE GAULLIST CREDENTIALS. AT THE PRESENT TIME, IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL THESE GROUPS AND LEADERS TO FOLLOW POMPIDOU'S LEAD, AND THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE CEMENT OF COMMON POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND MUTUAL INTEREST, WHICH HELD THE GOVERNMENT COALITION TOGETHER FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS, WILL WEAKEN IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

4. IN DROPPING MICHEL DEBRE AND OTHER " BARONS" FROM GOVERNMENT AND IN PUBLICLY SINGLING OUT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING, AS HE RECENTLY DID, AS " ONE OF THE TWO OR THREE LEADERS WHO CAN LEGITIMATELY ASPIRE TO A NATIONAL DESTINY" -- A CLEAR INDICATION THAT HE REGARDS GISCARD AS PRESIDENTIAL TIMBRE -- THE PRESIDENT, IN OUR VIEW, IS NOT INDULGING A PERSONAL PREFERENCE FOR REDUCED GAULLIST INFLUENCE. RATHER, HE IS RESPONDING PRAGMATICALLY TO POLITICAL REALITY AS HE SEES IT. THE GAULLIST OLD GUARD, ALTHOUGH STILL FULL OF FIGHT, IS AGING AND HAS LOST MUCH OF ITS POLITICAL APPEAL. DE GAULLE'S DOGMAS OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND GRANDEUR DO NOT PROVIDE A SUSTAINING IDEOLOGY FOR A PRESENT- DAY FRENCH POLITICAL MOVEMENT. POMPIDOU THUS APPEARS TO BE TRYING GRADUALLY TO TRANSFORM THE GOVERNMENT COALITION FROM A GAULLIST- DOMINATED BLOC WITH TRACES OF MODERN CONSERVATISM, TO A MODERN CONSERVATIVE BLOC WITH TRACES OF GAULLISM, IN SHORT, INTO A POLITICAL MOVEMENT MORE NEARLY RESEMBLING THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES OF THE UK AND THE FRG.

5. FOR THE PRESENT, POMPIDOU SATISFIED NEED FOR CONTINUITY BY LEAVING MOST OF THE MAJOR MINISTERS, I. E., GISCARD D'ESTAING, MARCELLIN, GUICHARD, FONTANET, IN PLACE, WHILE ATTEMPTING TO MEET DESIRE FOR CHANGE BY DROPPING DEBRE AND BRINGING IN NEW, YOUNGER LEADERS AT THE STATE SECRETARY LEVEL. IN THE PROCESS PRIME MINISTER MESSMER HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO SCREEN OUT POLITICIANS EVEN REMOTELY IMPLICATED IN LAST YEAR'S SCANDALS. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL LINEUP IS PROBABLY TRANSITORY AND WE EXPECT MINISTERIAL RESHUFFLING BEFORE THE 1976 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. IT IS LIKELY THAT WHOMEVER POMPIDOU NAMES AS PRIME MINISTER AT THAT TIME WILL BE REGARDED AS HIS DAUPHIN, SHOULD THE PRESIDENT DECIDE NOT TO RUN AGAIN. THE PRESIDENT MAY ALSO TRY TO RALLY OPPOSITION CENTER ELEMENTS AND PERHAPS THE RIGHT WING  
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OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY TO THE MAJORITY, RECOGNIZING THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S  
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6. PRESIDENT DOES NOT APPEAR TO FACE SERIOUS CHALLENGE FROM LEFT REPRESENTATION IN THE ASSEMBLY. COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES WILL PROBABLY REMAIN UNITED IN OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE THE VOTES TO CENSURE THE GOVERNMENT OR BLOCK ITS PROGRAM. SO FAR, THEY APPEAR INCAPABLE OF GOING BEYOND LEFT'S CAMPAIGN PLATFORM -- " THE COMMON PROGRAM OF GOVERNMENT" -- IN PROPOSING NEW, POSITIVE SOLUTIONS TO FRANCE'S PROBLEMS. MOREOVER, THERE ARE FORCES WITHIN BOTH PARTIES WHICH STRESS SEPARATE IDENTIFY RATHER THAN COMMON CAUSE. THE COMMUNISTS, PARTICULARLY, APPEAR CONCERNED BY THEIR RELATIVE ELECTORAL

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STAGNATION AT 20 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. THEY HAVE BEGUN TO RE-

COGNIZE IMPORTANCE OF GAUCHISTE ELEMENTS AND HAVE MADE TENTATIVE MOVES TO TRY TO BRING YOUNG, MILITANT, ENERGETIC FAR LEFT WITH- IN THEIR ORBIT. AT THE SAME TIME, MANY IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY ARE OPENLY QUESTIONING VALUE OF LONG- TERM ASSOCIATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS. THUS, WE DO NOT EXPECT THE PCF AND THE PS TO MOVE CLOSER TOGETHER IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, BUT WE DO BELIEVE THEY WILL MAINTAIN PRESENT STATE OF UNEASY ALLIANCE UP TO 1976 ELECTIONS, BARRING, OF COURSE, SOME DIVISIVE NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL EVENT.

7. WE EXPECT POMPIDOU WILL MOVE CAUTIOUSLY TOWARDS MORE FLEXIBLE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. HE HAS PROPOSED REDUCING PRESIDENTIAL TERM FROM SEVEN TO FIVE YEARS. IN ADDITION TO STRENGTHENING PRESIDENCY BY RENEWING POPULAR MANDATE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE MORE FREQUENTLY, THIS CHANGE WOULD ALSO ADDRESS BASIC DILEMMA OF PRESENT FRENCH INSTITUTIONS. DILEMMA HINGES ON FIFTH REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONAL ASSUMPTION OF HARMONY BETWEEN DIRECTLY- ELECTED PRESIDENT AND PRIMMIN HE NAMES, WHO NONETHE- LESS IS SUBJECT TO REMOVAL BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. FRENCH POLITICAL SYSTEM IS INHERENTLY UNSTABLE IF THE PRESIDENT IS NOT BACKED BY A COHESIVE ASSEMBLY MAJORITY. NO CONSTITUTIONAL RELIEF IS PRESENTLY AVAILABLE, SHOULD THE ASSEMBLY AND PRESIDENCY BE CONTROLLED BY OPPOSING FORCES. ONE REMEDY DISCUSSED IN POLITICAL CIRCLES IS ADOPTION OF FULL SEPARATION OF POWERS ON THE AMERICAN MODEL. SHORTENING PRESIDENTIAL TERM COULD BE FIRST, TENTATIVE MOVE TOWARDS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN THIS DIRECTION. SHORTER TERM WOULD ALSO MAKE IT EASIER FOR PRESIDENT TO STAND FOR RE- ELECTION SHOULD HE DECIDE TO. A SECOND TERM, OF FIVE YEARS, LIKELY BE MORE ACCEPTABLE BOTH TO PRESIDENT AND ELECTORATE.

8. PRESIDENT ALSO APPEARS DETERMINED TO GIVE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY A LARGER ROLE. THE ASSEMBLY IS PRESENTLY INHIBITED BOTH CONSTITUTIONALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY. IT MEETS ONLY SIX MONTHS OF THE YEAR, IN TWO 3 MONTH SESSIONS, AND HAS LITTLE POWER TO INITIATE LEGISLATION, ESTABLISH ITS OWN CALENDAR OR EVEN CONTROL THE GOF BUDGET. PSYCHOLOGICALLY, DEPUTIES FEEL KEENLY THAT " THE ACTION IS ELSEWHERE." THESE FACTORS, PLUS DISCIPLINE IMPOSED BY GROUPS WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY AND THE SHEER WEIGHT OF THE MAJORITY, HAVE IN THE PAST REDUCED THE ASSEMBLY TO NEAR IMPOTENCE. POMPIDOU HAS PROPOSED INCREASING CONSULTATION BET- WEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE ASSEMBLY' S STANDING COMMITTEES, AND

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INTENDS TO ASSIGN DEPUTIES FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME AS " ACTING STATE SECRETARIES" TO VARIOUS MINISTRIES. ( IN THIS WAY, DEPUTIES WILL NOT HAVE TO GIVE UP THEIR ASSEMBLY SEATS WHILE PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNMENT). IT IS POSSIBLE PRESTIGE OF THE ASSEMBLY MAY BE ON THE UP SWING SINCE A NUMBER OF PROMINENT LEADERS ARE NOW DEPUTIES. BUT IT WOULD TAKE, IN OUR VIEW,

FUNDAMENTAL REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION, GIVING THE ASSEMBLY  
COMMAND OF LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT PURSE  
STRINGS, TO PUMP BLOOD INTO THE ANEMIC LEGISLATIVE BODY THE  
ASSEMBLY HAS BECOME IN FRANCE. AND, THERE IS NO INDICATION  
THAT POMPIDOU INTENDS FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM.  
IRWIN

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, FR  
**To:** BONN  
BRUSSELS  
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